



DURGA PUJA AT SHELLA ASHRAMA:



Situated on the bank of river Umiam at the southern slope of Khasi Hills in Meghalaya, the village called Shella is exquisitely beautiful. Many educated and established families of the Khasi society have been staying through generations in this village surrounded by orchards of orange, pineapple, jackfruit, and areca nuts trees. Before partition of our country in 1947, people of this village used to maintain direct rapport with Sylhet, Dhaka and Kolkata for the purpose of higher education as well as trade and commerce.

Many devotees of Shella used to go to Sylhet every year to witness **Durga Puja** there. But, unfortunately, these simple tribal were sometimes ill-treated and exploited by people of the plains. It is to redress the hardships of the tribal devotees of Shella village that Rev. Swami Prabhanandaji (Ketaki Maharaj) started the **Durga Puja** there in 1931. Needless to say, the Puja was greatly greeted by one and all in the village. Among all the Ramakrishna Ashrama in the North Eastern Region, **Durga Puja** was observed first at Shella only. Whereas tribal & non-tribal devotees through generations have been observing the Puja with utmost devotion. Several eminent monks also participated in the **Durga Puja** since last 93 years. In time, this **Durga Puja** at Shella, sub-centre of Sohra Ashrama, has become a unique feature of this region.



The Ramakrishna Mission, Shella sub-centre, successfully celebrated Sri Sri Durga Puja from October 8-13, 2024, and Sri Sri Kali Puja on October 31, 2024. Devotees and well-wishers participated in large numbers with their families and friends, making the events a grand success.

The Durga Puja celebrations commenced on October 8, 2024, with Bodhana at 6:30 pm. The subsequent days witnessed a series of sacred rituals and ceremonies:

- October 9: Shasthi, Kalparambha, Amantran, and Adhibasa at 5:20 am
- October 10: Saptami Puja at 5:20 am
- October 11: Ashtami Puja at 5:20 am, followed by Sandhi Puja between 11:43 am and 12:31 pm
- October 12: Maha Navami Puja at 5:20 am, Havana at 9:30 am
- October 13: Dashami Puja at 5:30 am, Darpan Visarjan at 9:00 pm, Immersion and Shanti Jal at 4:30 pm, and Rama Nama Sankirtanam after Evening Prayer at 6:30 pm.

The programme showcased the rich spiritual heritage and traditions of Durga Puja.

Cultural Programs at Shella Durga Puja Celebrations

The Durga Puja celebrations at Shella witnessed a vibrant display of cultural programs, showcasing the talents of students from selected schools. The cultural events spanned three days, from Saptami Puja to Maha Navami Puja.

Day 1: Saptami Puja

- 19 cultural items were performed by students from selected schools.
- The program included a diverse range of cultural items, such as:
 - Group Dance

- *Group Songs*
- *Solo Songs*
- *Solo Dance*
- *Drama*
- *Phawar*



Day 2: Ashtami Puja

- *A total of 27 cultural items were performed by students from selected RKM Schools.*
- *The program featured a wide range of cultural events, highlighting the students' talents.*

Day 3: Maha Navami Puja

- *The final day of the cultural programs featured 25 cultural items.*
- *The event concluded the cultural celebrations at Shella, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.*

The cultural programs at Shella Durga Puja celebrations were a resounding success, providing a platform for students to showcase their talents and promoting cultural heritage and traditions.